THE

AERONAUT.

No. 134. Nov. 25. 1817

There are some minds, which must be always employed in their waking moments. In sleep, they seem to enjoy a profound repose most generally; if they are never cracked with unreal blasphemies in dreams, they are never tormented with ideal misery. The balance of the sleeping account is therefore in their favour. For, notwithstan-

during Mr Adalbons principal division of life, and the elevated portion of human bliss, which he assigns to the illusions of slumber; the negation of vision which may be either good or bad, is positive happiness. Could we sink at once into sound sleep, and wake without dreaming, the continuity in the chain of our thoughts would then never be broken; the last thought of the night becoming according to Locke the first of our morning's contemplation, and the time of its presence the measure of the duration of many hours—Thus, tho we should lose one third of life perhaps, by metaphysical reckoning, we should enjoy the other two thirds in their perfection, the body being perfectly recruited as well as the mind. Most miserable is he who dreads his couch! Most wretched of the unhappy! And it is certain that

the fear of which we speak may arise, not only from the goadings of a burthened conscience, from the recollection of crime or the terrors of retrospection, but from a habit of mind, which we may control, but which grows more unmanagable as it is indulged.

We said that some minds required constant aliment or exertion. This we need not dwell upon. God, who gives nothing in vain, when he vouchsafes uncommon capability, communicates at the same time an appetite and an energy, which will lead to be ever desiring of their legitimate food, and uneasy without its attainment, and generally rising through difficulty and opposition, to the object of its eager wishes.

We said that minds of this description dreamt less than others. We must be understood as speaking of dreams, as connected with their dependance on the

mind. And the fact is that sedentary pursuits will confirm the absence of thought in dreams which would be produced by a continuity of abstract thought when the body is working. Our position is maintainable on good grounds. If dreams are the children of imagination, the pictures must be more or less numerous, as the painter is fond of his art or acquainted with it — or as it is exercised in a greater or less degree during the day. Imagination is under our control; and deep continued study is the most effectual mode of ~~keeping~~ restraining its operations. Again, dreams are produced, as we know by experience, from any extraordinary exertion. We have heard of men say, who were no great scholars, that when they had studied mathematicks hard all day, they had a very restless feverish night afterwards; and woke up often, when they found themselves engaged in calculations. Methodical mechanical and me-

the clerical students dream but little.

Minds of the order mentioned have therefore their own happiness under control, in their waking and sleeping moments. Their own advancement and glory depend radically upon themselves. From him to whom much is given, much will be required; and if talent is a blessing, it requires no common exertion to restrain its covetings. A habit of mind is more incurable than a habit of body. No change of climate can eradicate it. No medication of principle can change it. It cannot be shaken off by violent exertion, or lost at once by amputation. It requires the steady hand of constant self recollection, and the sturdy curb of unaltered resolution.

The mind that needs some high employment of its faculties, will never fritter itself away, in the endless common places of life. It will never evaporate in the science of the bells or the cotton of a pewring or the cut of a

suit of cloaths: But it may become as deeply enamoured with desperate gambling as with the sublimity of Milton or of Homer.

This is a solemn truth. Time has repeated the desperate experiments of mind, until the lesson has become as old as the mountains, and as unregarded as the gales that murmur around them. The blighted wings of the noblest intellects, scattered through the desart of ages bear witness to the dangers to which genius has always been exposed, which alas! it has so rarely avoided.

But we cannot lose ourselves in a single paper, in a subject which it would require volumes to exhaust: Imagination is the faculty which it requires most care to controul within due bounds. Let us endeavour to point out how far its regulations may

prove a stepping to the mind of that order of which we have been speaking.

Methodical and regular habits of study influence the mental appetite in the same manner that methods of living do those of the body. Habit makes the desire recur at a time, when its gratification is at hand. But Imagination cannot be constrained by method. We have heard that the English learned write forty lines regularly before breakfast; but although it is a supposable case, we do not incline to think that a man can so order his mind that "the fit shall be on him" periodically. The indulgence of the imagination is most dangerous to a man who has an important part in life to maintain, to advance his own fortune and those of his family; to promote the honor of his name or of his country. Alas! the long record of Poets from Homer

to Savage need not be adduced at this late hour to prove that however brilliant the sole cultivation of the imagination may be in theory, it is but a sorry profession in practice.

The mere gratification of animal desire has nothing to do with imagination in itself, as it is common to men with the brutes.† But the mind whose own stimulus is always strong, if not under control, is liable to run to the wildest extent in its own dreams of possible pleasure. Then it is that imagination makes libertines in heart, who never realize their impossible revenges. They become discontented with the frugality for which they have bartered their reputation. They are no longer capable of being serviceable to themselves or their community. This is an effect produced by one of the incidents of

† Some questions might however be started on this point, to shake the doctrine of philosophers, that brutes have no imagination?

a disease to which minds of this order are most liable, from the indulgence of imagination. We mean Reverie.

The mind that requires active engagement, when at a loss for food is thrown back on its own resources. Hence results a disease similar to that which excess produces in the body; corrupting if we may so speak, the blood of the mind. That there is a pleasure in indulging reverie, which in legal language savours so much of the reality, that we can not chuse a just line between it and actual enjoyment; none we presume will deny: and none can so fully appreciate the weight of that enjoyment, as they can, whose imaginations can best people the ideal world, which forms the sphere of their self dependent life. Now men

whose minds require constant entertain-
=ment, have more or less, all a great
portion of imagination. It is the
quickening spirit which leavens the
whole lump. Perhaps we may identi-
=fy it with the appetite of mind of
which we are speaking.

Of the folly of reveries thousands
have spoken; and, to tell the truth, they
have given no great proofs of their in-
=sience in the discovery that ~~they~~
reveries are foolish things, or in the
reason which they have assigned there-
=for. It is not because they are un-
=real simply that they are to be
shunned. If we can enjoy ourselves
with delusions (and what is Time but
a delusion?) without any injury to
mind, body or soul, shall such hy-
=pothesis supplement present us?
But we cannot. The habit of indul-
=ging in frequent reveries, destroys
the vitality of the mind, and not

only squandering the time of their duration but makes the residue of it unprofitable. It keeps the soul in a dream; its energies are not employed in studying men as they are; but are exercised upon beings and things that are not. The castlebuilder knows not the nature of his fellow creatures, and he can never move among them with profit to himself. All his senses are shown as to earth, and awake only in their sphere of absurdities. His visions are never realized of course; no miracle is wrought to give him what he seeks — for it requires a miracle yet greater to make him happy in the possession of what he dreams of. His affections are perverted; his energies are palsied; his temper is soured and his hopes are blasted.

We would not repeat these trite remarks, if they did not come into

vied, as being the end to which our foregoing speculations led. Youth is most apt to indulge reverie; and in youth bad habits are most easily acquired and got rid of. Method is the antidote; the cure is all important. Of, as we noticed in the course of our remarks, it is better not to dream, the method of the mind by day as we also remarked, can control the visions of the night. The man, therefore, who has a mind calling for constant fuel, would seem to have in its grasp a higher power altogether, than is vouchsafed to the rest of mankind — a power over its own happiness or misery — the capability of becoming its own almoner.

S.